



**TO: Clerk Sleeper, Michigan House of Representatives**

**FROM: Barbara Smith Warner on behalf of National Vote at Home Institute**

**DATE: June 7, 2023**

**RE: Testimony in support of HB 4699**

The National Vote at Home Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works to increase voters' access to, use of, and confidence in voting at home. Besides my official role of Executive Director, I am testifying today both as a resident of Oregon, where we created the first vote at home system and have used it successfully for over twenty years, and as a former legislator who served in the Oregon House (2014-2022).

HB 4699 will implement the permanent absentee option – which we call Single Sign Up – for Michigan voters, and we strongly support this bill. Permanent absentee voting benefits both voters and elections administrators. For voters, they are provided the convenience of being able to vote at home for every election, without needing to remember to reapply for a mailed-out ballot for every election or every year. They get their ballot delivered to them for every subsequent election automatically unless they move or change their mind. This provides voters not only with convenience but also with an important reminder at every election, which is particularly important in local elections, special elections, and primaries, where voter turnout is often significantly lower than in a general election.

For election officials and administrators, this will save them time and money that they currently use to process absentee ballot requests from many of the same voters, election after election, year after year. That duplication of effort is clearly wasting vital resources that could be directed to other requirements. In fact, recent research across multiple states revealed that ~50% of those voting absentee are “repeaters” – choosing to vote that way over and over. By allowing voters to sign up for permanent absentee status, elections officials would see a reduction in paperwork and administrative impact across their organizations.

Instituting a permanent absentee option for voters is a very positive step for the citizens of Michigan, and for your election officials, and we look forward to sharing resources on best practices for its implementation.